



# **Town of Westfield**

## **Residential Curbside Recycling Changes**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Updated December 2018**



#### **What are the key changes in our residential recycling program?**

Effective January 1, 2019, only plastic types #1 and #2 will be accepted curbside and at the Conservation Center. This change is the result of significant shifts in the recycling industry at large that are affecting curbside single stream collection. China, the primary market for America's recyclables, has recently placed a ban on many different types of plastics, which substantially limits the items being accepted for recycling across many communities. In addition, residents are reminded of the changes that were implemented over the past year:

- No plastic bags of any kind will be accepted.
- Shredded paper is no longer accepted.
- All allowable recyclables may be commingled in the same reusable receptacle. Containerizing your recycling at the curb is highly encouraged to minimize moisture contamination.

While there are currently no markets for plastics #3 - #7, the Town will continue to monitor alternative solutions for these items within the industry.

#### **Why are these changes being made?**

The recycling industry is currently undergoing many serious changes that are affecting curbside single stream collection. China, the primary market for America's recyclables, has recently placed a ban on 24 different types of plastics, and has also put strict quality standards on recycling.

Contamination levels have reached 20-25% of all curbside recycling materials; contamination occurs when items that don't belong in your home's recycling bin are placed there. When contaminants end up in recyclables, they have the potential to turn the entire load into trash and increase processing costs. As a result, changes are necessary to improve the quality of collectible curbside recyclables.

#### **Who made the decision about these changes?**

The elimination of plastic bags and shredded paper was mandated at the County level in June 2018 to address the significant, shifting dynamics of the recycling industry. Our vendor, Giordano Company, continued to honor the collection of plastics #1-7 in Westfield for the duration of the Town's contract through the end of 2018, but will only accept plastics #1 & #2 effective January 1, 2019 – which mirrors the collection standards in many neighboring municipalities.

#### **Can all acceptable recycling be mixed in the same container?**

Yes. All acceptable items may be co-mingled in the same container, which should be at least 32 gallons and clearly marked "recycling." Items may not be placed in plastic bags.

#### **What if I don't use a container?**

The use of a lidded container is strongly recommended. Once materials are wet or contain moisture, they will not be accepted.

**Are these changes exclusive to Westfield?**

No. Many communities across the country face similar changes due to the ongoing significant shifts in the recycling industry.

**How can I identify which types of plastics are now accepted?**

Acceptable plastic materials will have a "PET," "PETE," or "HDPE" mark, or the number 1 or 2 within an imprinted triangle on the bottom of the container. Examples include, but are not limited to soft drink bottles, water bottles, cooking oil, milk jugs, cleaning agents, laundry detergents, and shampoo bottles.

**How clean does a container need to be before recycling it?**

Containers should be rinsed and empty of all food. They do not need to be thoroughly washed. Cardboard boxes should be free of any and all packing material.

**Are any types of plastic bags accepted?**

No. Plastic bags (blue, clear, black, even those marketed as "recycling bags") are not compatible with the machines that sort recyclables at the processing facility and are therefore not compliant with updated guidelines.

Many stores accept plastic bags for recycling at in-store collection bins, including Stop and Shop, Lowe's, Shop Rite, Target, Walmart, Wegmans, and Whole Foods. For a complete list, visit [www.plasticfilmrecycling.com](http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.com).

**How can I dispose of shredded paper if it's no longer recyclable?**

Shredded paper should be placed in the trash. If you have paper to shred, consider utilizing one of the County's Mobile Paper Shredding events (full schedule is available on [www.ucnj.org/recycling](http://www.ucnj.org/recycling)). Dry paper that has not been shredded is still acceptable in curbside recycling.

**What additional resources are available?**

- Westfield residents may bring their recyclables to the Conservation Center during its regular hours of operation. No permit is necessary. In addition to accepting recyclable paper products, glass, plastic, and metal containers, the Conservation Center accepts electronic waste, textiles, and scrap metal. A 2018 grant the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders' Recycling Enhancement Grant program allowed for further expansion of the recycling program; residents can now also drop off batteries, fluorescent bulbs, plastic toys, plastic bags/film, and Styrofoam. For more information, please visit: [www.westfieldnj.gov/conservation](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/conservation).
- For additional information about our recycling vendor's efforts, please refer to Giordano's website ([www.gogreengiordano.com](http://www.gogreengiordano.com)), call their hotline (1-800-216-2250, ext. 2), or email them ([service@gogreengiordano.com](mailto:service@gogreengiordano.com)).
- For Union County recycling information, including options for scrap metal, electronics, batteries and other materials, please visit [www.ucnj.org/recycling](http://www.ucnj.org/recycling).
- For additional resources that include local recycling schedules and guidelines, reminders, and broader recycling industry information, download the free [Recycling Coach](#) app to your phone.
- The Town of Westfield, in partnership with CurbMyClutter, offers a program that picks up used clothing and electronics from your doorstep. For more information, visit [www.curbmyclutter.com](http://www.curbmyclutter.com).